

*****DRAFT*****

Minutes

Human Services Commission

Thursday, December 8, 2005

5:00 P.M.

Kiva – City Hall

3939 Drinkwater Boulevard

Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Present: Chair Dave Bachmann, Commissioners Jeannine Berg, Angela Bowers, Diane Fausel, and Kathleen Hemmingsen

Absent: Vice-Chair Donna Reid and Commissioner Clemens Czapinski

Staff Present: Connie James, Kathy Breen, Cindy Ensign, Phil Hershkowitz, Valerie Kime Trujillo and Hugh McGill

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bachmann called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 10, 2005 MEETING

Commissioner Fausel moved to approve the November 10, 2005 regular meeting minutes and Commissioner Bowers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE IN ARIZONA

Diane Fausel, Director of Community Impact Initiatives for Mesa United Way, provided a presentation on adoption and foster care in Arizona.

Chair Bachmann discussed how he had recently read that younger children in foster care can't find homes and when these children do not receive the nurturing they need, it affects their brain development. He indicated that there was a push from the state to get these younger foster children into homes and is that starting to happen? Commissioner Fausel stated that they are seeing small and incremental changes with the organized efforts of professionals in the field e.g., the recent statewide conference. She added that there are efforts to change the mindset of people in the community regarding foster children and she and others in the field are committed to changing the mindset; she indicated that the community can no longer sit back from this issue and she believes that there will be significant changes coming along.

AID TO ADOPTION OF SPECIAL KIDS/LODESTAR FAMILY CONNECTIONS CENTER

Barb Trella, Director of Community Relations for Aid to Adoption of Special Kids and Center Director for Lodestar Family Connections Center, provided a presentation of the services offered by Aid to the Adoption of Special Kids (AASK) and the Lodestar Family Connections Center.

Commissioner Fausel asked if AASK was just focusing on children from Maricopa County or children statewide. Ms. Trella stated that their training calendar goes to anyone who wants to be on mailing list and many of the people on their list come from outside of Maricopa County. She added that they are looking at expanding in both the East and West Valley, as well as addressing the many requests for services in the northern part of the state. She said that when

the agency's resources grow, they would like to expand. Commissioner Fausel added that she visited the Lodestar Family Connections Center and encouraged all to visit.

Chair Bachmann asked where someone would begin the process if they wanted to become a foster parent. Ms. Trella stated that they can call the agency at 602-254-2275 x203 and speak to a recruitment specialist or go to their website at www.aask.az.org.

CHILDREN'S ACTION ALLIANCE

Beth Rosenberg, Director of Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, discussed policy issues related to child abuse and neglect, foster care and adoption, including what are possible legislative issues for the coming session. She referred those interested in children's issues and policies to begin their research at the agency's website: www.azchildren.org.

Commissioner Bowers asked about the 70% of children who are adopted, how long do these children remain in foster care before they are eligible for adoption? Ms. Rosenberg stated that the law indicated that a child has to be in foster care at least 6 months before being adopted, however, many children are in foster care much longer than that. She added that they try to make sure that the placement of a child is just right, which can take time as well. She said that often, kids are in foster care two years or more before an adoption is finalized.

Chair Bachmann thanked Ms. Rosenberg for presenting, even though she was under the weather. He stated upon looking through the transitions in the information packet regarding foster kids turning 18, all but one ends disastrously. He said it seems such sad endings are due to a good deal of miscommunication between agencies and some apathy from caseworkers. He asked for Ms. Rosenberg's opinion on why these cases end as they do and if revamping the Department of Economic Security (DES) will moderate that confusion or miscommunication. Ms. Rosenberg stated that she doesn't think the proposed reorganization of DES (moving Developmental Disabilities and CPS departments) is necessarily a good idea. If the reorg happens, departments such as welfare and labor will work in asylum. Currently, the director, David Berns has put units in place where services are integrated, which allows an easier connection with the resources needed to improve a child's life. She added that we need to give DES a chance to provide the services as they are organized now. She also stated that DES has problems with recruiting, training and keeping new staff, and the turnover does not provide the stability that children and families need. She said that DES is trying to keep the staff they have to provide the needed stability. She ended by saying that DES is going through a cultural change regarding what their responsibility is for older children and the system in general, understanding that they have a responsibility to older children who have been in care; trying to provide those supports is rd/difficult but they are willing to give it a shot so we should support them.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF SCOTTSDALE EMPLOYEES

Brett Jackson, City of Scottsdale Recreation Coordinator, his wife Susan spoke about their experiences working with the foster and adoptive programs in Arizona. Scottsdale Police Officer, Joe Geremia and his wife Rose were unable to attend.

Chair Bachmann asked what would the Jackson's say to couples who might be thinking about adopting. Mrs. Jackson, who has two biological children, one foster child, one adopted child and one in the process of being adopted, said that interested couples should meet with current foster and adoptive families because they can give you their first hand experience. Mr. Jackson said that those interested should stick with the process, because it is easy to get frustrated, but

in the end adoption is quite rewarding. Chair Bachmann said that the Jackson's were a great advertisement for adoption and thanked them for presenting at the meeting.

STAFF AND COMMISSION UPDATES

Ms. James thanked the evening's presenters along with Kathy Breen, who organized the agenda, for their hard work on the issue of foster care and adoption. She discussed the new Scottsdale Revitalization Program booklet given to commission, which discusses everything one would need to know about the revitalization efforts in the city. She also discussed their copy of the packet that was sent to City Council, which includes the Human Services Issues Report, Fiscal Year Update for 04/05 and the letter from Chair Bachmann to the City Council. She also discussed the draft 2006 City of Scottsdale Legislative Report that Bridget Schartz-Manock will take to City Council on December 12, 2005, and that for the first time, Human Services has its own section. She reminded the commission that the next meeting will be on January 12 in the City Hall Kiva and the agenda will include: housing issues, the reorganization of Housing Rehabilitation and the STOMP program.

Ms. James then introduced Kathy Breen, Human Services Coordinator, who updated the Commission on the following:

Civic Center Senior Center – The new Scottsdale Senior Center at Granite Reef is at an approximate 85% completion rate. Anticipated construction finish date is late March 2006. The annual senior center dance club holiday dinner and dance will be held on December 17 in our ballroom. Registration for the winter sessions starts December 15 with classes starting the week of January 9 of 2006; one can register for these classes either by phone or online.

Community Assistance Office – A total of 53 applications were submitted to the Community Assistance Office by the November 18, 2005 application deadline; 17 Community Development Block Grant, 3 HOME, 8 General Fund Contract and 25 Scottsdale Cares applications were submitted by non-profit agencies. As of November 2005, five Residential Rehabilitations were completed with seven rehabilitations in process. In addition, 19 Emergency Rehabilitations have been completed assisting Scottsdale residents with 35 applicants currently on the Housing Rehabilitation wait list having an approximate wait of 12 months. Resume workshops will be provided December 15 and 29 from 10 am to noon and individual resume and job search assistance will be provided December 13 and 27. **Paiute Neighborhood Center** – The Scottsdale Center for the Arts sponsored a youth photography workshop, taught by resident artist Rebecca Ross. The youth, ages 6 through 17, had the opportunity to learn how to take photographs and create collages. Their artwork will be displayed in an art exhibit at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts in January. Scottsdale Healthcare presented "Think First for Kids" and "Trauma Nurse Talk Tough." Both of these presentations were very beneficial to the participants and the information was explained in a manner that the kids could understand the importance of practicing safety to prevent self-injuries. Family Holiday Dinner is scheduled for Tuesday, December 13 from 6:30-8:30 pm. A special guest will arrive via a City of Scottsdale fire engine. National Charity League members will cook and serve the dinner for approximately 180 neighborhood guests. "Shop with a Cop," a program supported by the Police Officers of Scottsdale Association, is scheduled for Saturday, December 17. The Paiute Human Service Specialists are taking applications and 125 children from the City of Scottsdale will be selected for the opportunity to "Shop with a Cop." **Via Linda Senior Center** – The STOMP program has 17 projects currently scheduled and three home visits set up; 24 projects have been completed this fiscal year, and are currently booked with projects up until March 2006. Once again, the community was very generous with its donations to the Adopt a Senior Program. The Via Linda Senior Center Adopt a Senior Program will serve 127 seniors this year. This program provides holiday gifts and grocery gift cards to socially isolated seniors in Scottsdale. City of Scottsdale Human Services Professionals and Recreation Professionals from several sites began

delivering the gift packages and completing in-home assessments December 5. This program provides a wonderful opportunity to reach out to seniors who are unable to leave their homes. Flu Shot Clinics were very successful, with final totals just under 2,000 provided at three sites: Civic Center, Paiute and Via Linda Senior Centers. The tenth annual Via Linda Senior Center Art Show, Joy to the World of Art, will be held at Via Linda Senior Center December 12 to 16. Over 185 artists have been invited. The opening night will feature entertainment and light refreshments. The highlight of the evening will be family and friends viewing the obvious talents of the patrons at Via Linda. **Vista del Camino** – Vista del Camino is seeking donors wishing to adopt families for the holidays. General donations of toys, food and gift certificates are also being sought. Anyone interested may call Pat at 480-312-0063. Vista del Camino provided turkeys and Thanksgiving food to over 450 families. Donations came from individuals, families, organizations, churches and schools. Human Services staff, City staff and community volunteers assisted with distribution. **Youth and Family Services** – The Scottsdale Mayor's Youth Council held it's November meeting at Vista del Camino, where they learned about services provided through the center. Additionally, they assisted with sorting and bagging food, and assembled nearly 50 bags of food for the upcoming adopt-a-family program. Twenty-five Youth Council members attended the meeting. Three Youth Council members also volunteered on Friday, assisting in the food bank. Youth and Family Services staff provided a presentation on Bullying and Bullying Interventions to the Paiute Action Committee. The PAC includes representatives from Boys and Girls Clubs of Scottsdale, Scottsdale Prevention Institute El Centro de la Familia, Campfire, Paiute Neighborhood Center, and Neighborhood Parks. Workshops are available for teens interested in learning skills that will assist them in the world of work. Resume writing, customer service skills, and general tips on interviewing are all available to teens, and are free of charge. Call Youth and Family Services, at 312-7922, for times and locations.

Chair Bachmann again thanked Brett and Susie Jackson for taking time from their busy lives to present on adoption.

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chair Bachmann made an open call to the public for comments/questions/announcements or other business. There were no replies.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be brought before the commission, Chair Bachmann requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Fausel moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Berg seconded. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Beth Hollmann, Recording Secretary.

Meets established criteria.

Connie James
Director, Human Services